



The Oakletter, Dec. 14, 2025

This was my 2019: On Jan. 8, my mother died. In February, I was made executor of her estate. On March 8, I learned that I was projected for a transfer from Epworth UMC in Norfolk to Trinity UMC in King George. In June, I moved. On July 11, my sister Micah died. In August, Gene Clift, the most beloved member of Trinity, died. The day before his funeral, I got a call from the Navy saying that I was being involuntarily mobilized to Djibouti, Africa, for nine months in 2020. That fall, I had to go to court when my mother's estate was sued. By December, COVID-19 was in the news. I regarded each of these events as another layer of insanity. I also decided that 2019 would be a good year for us to have a Blue Christmas service at Trinity.

I had never seen a Blue Christmas service. I first heard of them in 2007 after my father died, when my mother got a postcard from her church, Baylake UMC, saying that a Blue Christmas service would be held there. Perhaps I got one of those postcards, too, since I moved back home that year.

I don't have a particular memory of the 2019 Blue Christmas service at Trinity. I remember that my niece Kara was there and that people told me that they liked the service. I remember the Blue Christmas service at Djibouti in 2020 better since it seemed to minister to many who would not be home that year for Christmas.

I introduced Blue Christmas to Oaklette in 2023 because of something I read in the Possibilities Report Oaklette got from the District the year before. It said, "The congregation has experienced significant loss before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many deaths have impacted Oaklette, and the pandemic has limited the opportunities for grief." Our 2023 service was intended to lament those losses.

Last year's service seemed more meaningful to me, perhaps because of the added element of faux wood wallpaper where we posted prayer requests and concerns. I still have that paper, but I found a different liturgy to use this year, and I hope that it will prove meaningful as well. Pat Newbern read this liturgy and commented, "So beautiful. Touched my heart."

I pray it will touch other hearts, too. Please come to Oaklette's Blue Christmas service, Sunday, Dec. 21, at 3 p.m.



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This week at Oaklette

Sunday, December 14

9:30 am Sunday School
9:30 am SOTM
11:00 am Christmas cantata
6:30 p.m. Evening study

Monday, Dec. 15

10 a.m. Food pantry [Nancy Helsel and Stella Price]
7 p.m. HRM Band

Thursday, Dec. 17

10 a.m. Bible study

Friday, Dec. 19

9 a.m. Breakfast at Cracker Barrel in Greenbrier; please RSVP to the office by Dec. 18

Sunday, Dec. 21

9:30 am Sunday School
9:30 am SOTM
11:00 am Fourth Sunday in Advent worship
3:00 p.m. Blue Christmas service
6:30 p.m. Evening study

[Please note that there has been no change to Oaklette's prayer list since it was last printed here two weeks ago.]

Birthdays

David Miles, Jr. – December 14
Jackson Castellow – December 16
Alisa Williams – December 16
Tom Henry – December 17
Walter Nebrotskie – December 18
Beth Carroll – December 20
Felix Stephens, Jr. – December 20

Anniversary

Ericka & Chuck Litten – December 18

Sunday's opening scripture, Luke 1:46b-55

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

"He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."



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